

Burn Prevention

Tips for Preventing Burns

Burns are the fourth leading cause of unintentional injury death in the United States. Severe burn injuries require multiple hospitalizations and lengthy treatment and may result in permanent disability and disfigurement. Most of these burn injuries can be prevented.

1 Prevent burns before they happen

- Make sure the handles of pots and pans don't stick out over the edge of the stove where they could be bumped.
- Don't leave stirring utensils in pots while cooking.
- Turn off all burners and ovens when they're not in use.
- Have adequate dry potholders or oven mitts hanging near your stove. Using a wet potholder can result in a severe steam burn.
- Do not place wet foods into deep-fat frying pans containing hot grease. The violent reaction between the fat and the water will splatter hot oil.
- Remove lids and covers from pots beginning with the side facing away from you.
- Use only proper containers in a microwave oven. Let microwave-cooked foods or liquids cool before carefully removing covers.
- Do not allow children or pets to play in the area where you are cooking.
- Wear tight-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Adjust your water heater's thermostat to below 120 degrees F to prevent scald burns. Always turn on the cold-water faucet first, then add hot.

2 Child Safety

- Keep matches and smoking materials out of the sight and reach of children.
- Do not allow children to play around fireplace fires or around working space heaters.
- Cover unused wall outlets with safety caps and replace any damaged, frayed, or brittle electrical cords.
- Do not leave hot barbecue grills unattended and supervise children's cookout activities such as toasting marshmallows or hot dogs.
- Teach your children that steam radiators, stove burners, irons and other familiar household objects are sometimes hot. Do not leave hot items unattended.
- Teach children to Stop, Drop and Roll if their clothes catch on fire.

3 First Aid for Burns

- **Cool it.** For first and second degree burns smaller than the person's palm can usually be treated in the home. Remove all clothing from around the burned area, cool the burned area – preferably with running cool water for ten minutes—to carry the heat away from the victim's skin and reduce pain. After cooling the burned area, **wrap it** loosely in sterile gauze or clean cloth.
- **When to Seek Medical Attention:**
 - All burns on the face, hands, feet, major joints or genital area and burns that are circumferential (wrap around an arm or leg).
 - All chemical and electrical burns, including lightning injury.
 - Burns occurring in an enclosed space, such as a house or car, may result in smoke inhalation.
 - Burns that are white, gray, leathery or painless.
 - Burns larger than the size of the person's palm.These burns require emergency medical treatment. Call 911 or go to your local emergency department and get an evaluation by a physician. Cool them only with dry sterile dressings until help arrives.
Treat for shock: To minimize the risk of shock, keep the victim's body temperature normal. Lay the victim on his or her back and cover unburned areas with a clean dry blanket. Remove rings or tight clothing from around the burned area before swelling sets in and, elevate the injured areas.